

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE FY04 EQIP RANKING CRITERIA CENTRAL HIGHLANDS LOCAL WORK GROUP

### Ranking the applications – Using the Worksheet

Important – Before granting points to an application for any item:

- 1) The modifier must apply to the area to be treated under the application.
- 2) The application must contain a conservation practice eligible for EQIP cost share or incentive payment that will address each modifier for which points are being awarded.
- 3) The total ranking score awarded for a given application category may not exceed the maximum score that application category.

The Local Work Group will apply a ratio system to all applications, as follows:

- 1) One application category scored – multiply the total category score by 1.0
- 2) Two application categories scored – multiply the total score for all categories by 0.55
- 3) Three application categories scored – multiply the total score for all categories by 0.35
- 4) Four application categories scored – multiply the total score for all categories by 0.26
- 5) Five application categories scored – multiply the total score for all categories by 0.23

### **Irrigated Land** (Maximum = 300 Points)

#### ***"Improved irrigation efficiency on non-surface systems" (150 points)***

Grant points for improving irrigation efficiency on non-surface systems by 10% or more above current conditions. Evaluation may be based on case file information or applicant interview.

#### ***"Surface Irrigation will be converted to a more efficient system" (0 - 155 points)***

Surface irrigation is the distribution of irrigation water by surface means such as furrows, borders, contour levees, or contour ditches. Grant points if the application includes conservation practices that directly improve irrigation efficiencies on land that is currently under surface irrigation. This includes the use of gated pipe, PAM, sprinkler, and trickle systems. Evaluation may be based on case file information and applicant interview. Different points may be assigned by the LWG based on the proposed system change.

Surface to Trickle	<u>155</u> pts
Surface to Pivot + IWM	<u>155</u> pts
Surface to Hand/Wheel + IWM	<u>155</u> pts
Buried pipe / gated pipe w / PAM + IWM	<u>0</u> pts
PAM with IWM	<u>0</u> pts

#### ***"Pest Mgt. will be included for crop or pasture" (50 points)***

Grant points if the application includes crop or pasture where pest control is needed to reduce adverse effects on ground and/or surface water by including the development and implementation of the Pest Management practice. Evaluation may be based on soil interpretations, case file information related to pesticide risk analysis, and applicant interview.

#### ***"Nutrient Mgt. will be included (non-livestock operations)" (75 points)***

Grant points if the application is a non-livestock operation with lands where plant nutrients and soil amendments are applied, and will include the development and implementation of the Nutrient Management practice to minimize agricultural non-point source pollution of surface and ground water resources. Evaluation may be based on case file information and applicant interview.

***“Will applicant apply IWM – Yes or No” (0 or 75 points)***

Does the applicant plan to make a change in irrigation management that will allow them to meet NRCS’s IWM practice standard: yes or no.

Yes = 75 points

No = 0 points

**Dryland Cropland (Maximum = 200 Points)**

***“Wind erosion soils are present on cropland” (120 points)***

Points will be awarded if the predominant soil on the applicant's land being considered for EQIP is on the **WESL** list from *the 2-CRP (Rev. 3) WA Amend. 6 dated 12-17-99*. This is Washington Exhibit 11, **WESL Soils List**. This list contains soils that have a dominant component of a soil formed in organic or volcanic material or a soil covered with volcanic material. This material can become airborne, and has a high potential of being suspended in air during wind events, and can significantly contribute to non-attainment of PM10 air quality standards. The predominant soils are defined as soils that make up 50 acres or 1/3 of the field under consideration.

***“Soil “T” is < or = 3; or soil “I” is > or = 86 on cropland” (75 points)***

This modifier addresses soil depth and soil susceptibility to wind erosion. “T” denotes the maximum rate of soil erosion that can occur and still permit crop productivity to be sustained economically. Values range from 1 to 5 tons per acre per year. Generally the deeper the soil the higher the “T” value. A soil that has 60 inches of favorable subsoil for plant growth has a “T” of 5. A soil that only has 12 inches has a “T” of 1. “I” (Soil Erodibility Index) is the susceptibility of a given soil to wind erosion. Values range from “0” to “310”. The higher the value the higher the potential to blow. Silt loam's generally range from 38 – 56. Very fine sandy looms or loamy fine sands range from 86 to 134.

Points will be awarded if the planning soil in the proposed contract has a “T” of 1, 2, or 3; or “I” of 86 or higher.

***“Direct Seed will be used in a system” (40 points)***

Grant points if practice “Residue Management, Direct Seed” will be applied. The purpose is to reduce sheet and rill erosion, wind erosion, maintain or improve soil organic matter content, conserve soil moisture, manage snow to increase plant available moisture or reduce plant damage from freezing or desiccation, and provide food and escape cover for wildlife. This is an incentive practice.

***“Ephemeral gullies on cropland need treatment” (10 – 40 points)***

Points are granted if there is sufficient indication that excessive erosion is occurring from one or more ephemeral gullies within the cropland included in the application. This may be based on case file information, aerial photo interpretation, topographic maps, and applicant interview. Different points may be assigned by the LWG based on the proposed treatment.

Grassed Waterway	<u>40</u> pts
Strip-cropping	<u>40</u> pts
Terracing	<u>30</u> pts
Grade Stabilization Structure	<u>20</u> pts
Other	<u>10</u> pts

***“Nutrient Mgt. will be included (non-livestock operations)” (40 points)***

Grant points if the application is a non-livestock operation with lands where plant nutrients and soil amendments are applied, and will include the development and implementation of the Nutrient Management practice to minimize agricultural non-point source pollution of surface and ground water resources. Evaluation may be based on case file information and applicant interview.

## **Grazing Land** (Maximum = 150 Points)

### ***“Prescribed grazing will be applied” (100 points)***

Points will be awarded if the applicant agrees to apply prescribed grazing on the proposed contract acres. The definition of prescribed grazing is the controlled harvest of vegetation with grazing animals managed with the intent to achieve a specified objective. The purposes are: to improve or maintain the health & vigor of the desired plant community; maintain or improve water quality and quantity, reduce soil erosion and maintain or improve soil condition; and improve or maintain animal health and productivity. It includes developing a grazing schedule for the operating unit to document expected quantity and quality of forage for each pasture; number of livestock by kinds and class, and periods of grazing, resting and other treatment for each management unit.

### ***“Water Development &/or cross-fencing are used to facilitate prescribed grazing” (30 points)***

Grant points if there is sufficient indication that: (1) there is either a lack of adequate water quantity or availability and/or, (2) there is a lack of adequate cross-fencing and these are limiting factors for achieving proper grazing distribution. Evaluation may be based on aerial photos, case file information, the National Range and Pasture Handbook, and applicant interview.

### ***“There is an excessive invasion of weeds or woody vegetation” (10 – 30 points)***

Grant points if there is sufficient indication that there are adverse impacts to plant production, condition, and quality goals as a result of invasive weeds or woody vegetation. Evaluation may be based on aerial photography and applicant interview. LWG may assign points based on extent of problem.

100% of planning unit impacted	<u>30</u> pts
50 – 99% of planning unit impacted	<u>20</u> pts
25 – 49% of planning unit impacted	<u>15</u> pts
< 25% of planning unit impacted	<u>10</u> pts

### ***“Livestock have uncontrolled access to riparian areas” (20 – 30 points)***

Grant points if there are riparian areas that are not fenced and there is sufficient indication that grazing of domestic animals occur within these areas. Evaluation may be based on aerial photos, case file information, and applicant interview. LWG may assign points based on proposed treatment.

a. Riparian area will be fenced	<u>20</u> pts
b. Prescribed Grazing w/o fencing	<u>20</u> pts
c. (a or b) + riparian forest buffer	<u>30</u> pts

## **Forest Land** (Maximum = 75 Points)

### ***“Forest stand improvement will be applied” (60 points)***

Points will be awarded if the applicant agrees to apply forest stand improvement on the proposed contract acres. The definition of forest stand improvement is to manipulate species composition and stocking by cutting or killing selected trees and understory vegetation. The purposes are: to improve understory forage production, aesthetics, wildlife & fish habitat, recreation, hydrologic conditions; to improve or sustain timber production; to initiate forest stand regeneration; or a combination of purposes. Documentation for this practice includes: the extent and size of the treatment area; spacing, density and numbers of preferred species and understory species; stocking rates in terms of basal area, spacing or trees per acre by species and size class distribution; and the method, felling direction and timing of tree cutting.

***“Forest access roads deliver sediment to salmonid-bearing streams” (5 – 30 points)***

Grant points if there is sufficient indication that forest (private, non-industrial) access roads are delivering sediment directly or indirectly to salmonid-bearing streams. Evaluation may be based on the applicant’s Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan, aerial photography, topographic maps, and applicant interview. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) definition for stream Types 1, 2, or 3 shall be the basis for determining if the stream is salmonid bearing. Use either DNR Typing Maps or fish presence maps developed locally through the Limiting Factors Analysis. LWG may assign points based on proximity.

Road adjacent to or crossing stream	<u>30</u> pts
Road within 1/8 mile of stream	<u>25</u> pts
Road within ¼ mile of stream	<u>20</u> pts
Road within ½ mile of stream	<u>15</u> pts
Road more than ½ mile of stream	<u>5</u> pts

***“Tree and/or Shrub Planting will be applied” (10 points)***

Grant points if the applicant agrees to establish plants for forest products, long-term erosion control, and improvement of water quality.

***“Forest Tree Pruning will be applied” (5 points)***

Points will be awarded if the applicant agrees to apply tree pruning for the purpose of: (1) Reducing fire hazards and, (2) Improve the quality of wood products.

**Livestock (Maximum = 75 Points)**

***“A CNMP will be included (livestock operations)” (60 points)***

Grant points if the application is a livestock operation with lands where animal manure is applied, and will include the development and implementation of a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan that meets NRCS criteria. Evaluation may be based on case file information and applicant interview.

***“Storage is needed for animal manure” (30 points)***

Grant points if a waste storage facility is needed and included in the application. Evaluation may be based on applicant interview, livestock numbers, and current storage capability.

***“Relocation of feeding facilities” (30 points)***

Grant points if project includes relocation of feeding facilities.

**ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS (Maximum = 200 Points)**

***“Multiple applications and prior contracts on the same land” (0 or 40 points)***

All individuals receive 40 points for their first application. For individuals with more than one application, 40 points are awarded to the individual’s highest scored application, and zero points are awarded to second and subsequent applications for any given application review period. Award zero points for an individual whose application is for land that has previously been under an EQIP contract.

***“Delivery system is non-PVC ” (40 points)***

Grant points if the existing irrigation water delivery line is non-PVC

***“Additional financial and/or technical assistance will be utilized” (40 points)***

Grant points if the treatment area is receiving assistance from a cost share program, located in a district priority area, or the additional financial assistance is being received from another non-federal entity.

***“A practice will be implemented to benefit terrestrial species occupying the proposed contract area” (0 – 40 points)***

Grant points if the application includes one of the following conservation practices and provides direct wildlife benefit for terrestrial species that occupy the proposed contract area. The LWG may assign different points for this modifier based on the proposed practices to be implemented.

Riparian Forest Buffer	<u>  0  </u> pts
Upland Wildlife Habitat Mgmt.	<u> 40 </u> pts
Wetland Wildlife Habitat Mgmt.	<u> 30 </u> pts
Restoration & Mgmt. of Rare and Declining Habitats	<u> 20 </u> pts

***“A buffer practice will be installed” (20 – 40 points)***

Grant points if the application includes a buffer practice that will provide a water quality benefit. Filter strips, field borders, grassed waterways, hedgerow plantings, field windbreaks, shelterbelts, contour grass strips, grass buffer strips, and riparian forest buffers are all examples of conservation buffers. Evaluation may be based on aerial photos, topographic maps, and applicant interview. Different points may be assigned by the LWG based on the buffer type.

Riparian Forest Buffer	40 pts
Shelterbelt	30 pts
Field Windbreak	30 pts
Hedgerow Planting	30 pts
Contour Grass Strips	20 pts
Grass Buffer Strips	20 pts
Grassed Waterway	20 pts
Field Borders	20 pts
Filter Strip	20 pts